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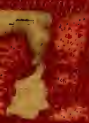

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MEMOIR

OF AN

EVENTFUL EXPEDITION

IN

CENTRAL AMERICA;

RESULTING IN THE DISCOVERY OF THE IDOLATROUS CITY OF

IXIMAYA,

In an unexplored region; and the possession of two

REMARKABLE AZTEC CHILDREN,

Descendants and Specimens of the Sacerdotal Caste, (now nearly extinct,) of the Ancient Aztec Founders of the Ruined Temples of that Country,

DESCRIBED BY

JOHN L. STEVENS, ESQ.,

AND OTHER TRAVELLERS.

Translated from the Spanish of

PEDRO VELASQUEZ,

OF SAN SALVADOR.

NEW YORK:

PRINTED BY J. W. BELL,

178 FULTON STREET.

1850.

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PREFACE,

BY THE PROPRIETORS

Since the publication of the former editons of this "Memoir," some doubts have been thrown upon its statements concerning the origin of the truly marvellous Aztec, or aboriginal Indian children, from Central America, (herewith exhibiting,) by several persons, recently from that country, who profess to be acquainted with ostensibly incompatible facts. They state that these children "came from the town of Grenada, in Nicaragua, and are the half idiotic offspring of an Indian woman, who is one of the common Indians there, a tribe well grown and developed," instead of being brought from a newly discovered aboriginal city, in an unexplored region of that country, and being the singular relics of a peculiar and exclusive caste, rendered "diminutive in stature and imbecile in intellect," by the immemorial intermarriages of their progenitors, as the "Memoir" avers.

Leaving the respectability and veracity of these gentlemen entirely unquestioned, we think it would have been more satisfactory to the public, as it certainly, and for many reasons, would have been to ourselves, if they had stated whether they derived their contradiction from their own personal knowledge, or from merely ordinary report. In the absence of any intimation upon this point, the question concerning the local origin and paternity of these mysterious and unprecedented specimens of the human race, is thrown back upon the best evidence, whether personal, circumstantial, or scientific, that can be collected for its solution.

With regard to the value of the personal testimony, if such it can be deemed, contained in the following very interesting and remarkable narrative, we can neither form nor suggest any opinion, except from the internal evidence which every reader has equally at command, as material for his conclusions. We have published the "Memoir," precisely as we received it, shortly after these extraordinary beings came into our possession, without adding or altering a word, and, hitherto, without remark, merely for what it purports to be—the Spanish account of their origin and mode of acquisition. While,

however, we expressly and distinctly decline all responsibility for the statements in this narrative, whether reasonable or romantic, corroborated or contradicted, as coming from foreign sources to us unaccredited and unknown, we, nevertheless, cordially concur with every reader who has expressed an opinion to us upon the subject, that the "Memoir," as it stands, furnishes a better-fitting and more lucid explanation of the strongly distinctive character, physiognomy, attitudes and habits of these interesting little creatures, than any other that we have heard suggested or asserted.

We regard these perfectly unique characteristics as among the strongest points of circumstantial evidence of which the question admits. First, every intelligent visitor of these children who has seen the engravings in Mr. Stephens' "Incidents of Travel," in Central America and Yucatan, from the drawings, by Mr. Catherwood, of the altars, idols, and other monuments, in and around the ruined temples of the ancient Aztec race, is instantly and forcibly struck with the perfect resemblance, in countenance, attitude, and apparent expression of *mental* character, between these children and *a certain distinct and peculiar class of figures* therein depicted, and of which some imperfect profile sketches are prefixed to this narrative. If the resemblance extended to the figures in general, it would be far less remarkable, and might justly be regarded as mere evidence of the similarity and perpetuity of the general race. But the figures to which we particularly refer, are as distinct, as a peculiar class, or caste, from the other and better forms, associated with them on the monuments, as these children confessedly are from the existing Indians of the country. They resemble this strictly unique class of figures with marvellous exactness, and no others. Except in these, they have no counterparts, either in nature or in art. The eminently singular and grotesque attitudes in which these figures are sculptured, and which we should suppose to be both difficult and painful to any human beings untrained to assume them, are frequently and unconsciously adopted by these children,—by the boy Maximo, more especially,—as if they had been trained to them from early infancy, by systematic discipline. Or, it would rather seem, from this, and a thousand other acts of grotesque and amusing mimicry which they are perpetually displaying, that the hereditary profession ascribed to their progenitors in this "Memoir," had descended to them in the spontaneity of a natural instinct.

Another circumstantial point in this question, is the fact that these children, although possessing perfect organs of speech, and amply sufficient intelligence for the acquisition of ordinary language, united

with a lively and insatiable curiosity concerning every new or unusual object they behold, had not, when first brought to this country, about a year since, a single word in any language which persons the best versed in the Central American dialects could interpret, even for the most familiar objects; and certainly not a syllable of the vernacular tongue of Grenada, which is so well known. They were, nevertheless, continually reciprocating little articulate mutterings to each other which they apparently understood, and they have always evinced a surprising aptitude to acquire the meaning of words addressed to them by their nurse and attendants. Their actual acquisition of the language they hear, has probably been as rapid as could be reasonably expected from the generality of children hearing it spoken for the first time, and not since regularly instructed in its elements. These undeniable facts are easily explained by the intimation in the "Memoir," that they had always been cloistered in the recesses of a pagan temple, the objects of superstitious vigilance and veneration, but are hardly reconcilable with the report that they were the children of the common Indians, in the town of Grenada, and brought up, to the age of seven or eight years, with a crowd of young companions. And yet another difficult fact is the extreme delicacy of their feet, which were evidently never accustomed to the barefooted gambols of half-savage Indian children, though they would have sported and raced with the best of them, had they enjoyed the opportunity. If, therefore, they ever were at Grenada, in the temporary charge of an Indian woman, which is not improbable, it could only have been for a short time, and in unusual seclusion.

The scientific evidence elicited upon this case, is altogether unfavorable to the conclusion that these mysterious children are the products of ordinary parentage and circumstances, and to be classed among those erratic vagaries of nature with which the annals of physiology abound. They are neither monsters in form nor idiots in mind, as these terms are usually applied. On the contrary, each is symmetrical in itself, and in relation to the other; and their minds, though almost infantine in development, are not remarkably deficient in any particular faculty, nor distinguished by any wild and controlling propensity, unless their inquisitiveness, imitativeness, and fondness for simple and harmless frolic, can be deemed exceptions to the statement. Their mental characteristics are precisely what every one who sees them immediately expects from their *physique*, although their like was never seen before, and they stand an unparalleled variety of humanity—unless that peculiar species recorded in the

Aztec monuments, to which we, in common with others, involuntarily refer them, be regarded as their prototypes. Some superficial observers, it is true, have suggested that they might be humanized and rational chimpanzees; but every man of science has declared that they hold no hybrid relationship with any of the inferior animals. It must also be remembered that there are *two* of them, of different ages and sexes. Nature does not repeat monsters resembling each other, or they would cease to be so. It is true their heads are each but little over twelve inches in circumference, and are thus smaller than the generality of new-born babes; but their bodies and limbs, though finely formed, are slender in proportion; for though approaching three feet in height, the heavier of them weighs but a fraction over twenty pounds. And thus, instead of being repulsive and disagreeable to the feelings, as all ill-formed specimens of childhood invariably are, they are attractive, engaging, and interesting; while the emotional lustre of their fine eyes is ever welcomed as an expression of intelligent and grateful sympathy for the kindness and affection they invariably receive. Indeed it has been uniformly admitted by men of science and the public press, that while they constitute the most extraordinary and inexplicable examples of the human form, they convey the impression of being miniatures, both physically and mentally, of some unique and unknown variety of our common race, rather than unnatural and violent departures from the established laws of organization and intellect.

Since their arrival in this country, as may readily be supposed, they have elicited an unusual degree of interest and attention from scientific men, and been subjected to many careful measurements and examinations. The following dimensions are taken from a lengthy and very interesting report by Dr. J. M. Warren, to the Boston Natural History Society. The abstract is from the published proceedings of that body, first January meeting, 1851.

"Dr. J. M. Warren read a paper containing some observations upon the two remarkable Indian Children from Central America, which have lately attracted the attention of scientific men and the public in this city.—The Boy is 33½ inches in height, and his weight is 20⅜ lbs. The Girl 29½ inches, and weighs 17 lbs.—

MEASUREMENT OF GIRL'S HEAD.	MEASUREMENT OF BOY'S HEAD.
Head 13 inches in circumference.	Circum. over hair and scalp, 13 inches
Ant. Post diameter, 4¼ inches.	Ant. Post. diameter, 4½ inches.
Lateral diameter, 3¾ inches.	Bi Temporal, not quite 4 inches.
Over the top of the head, from one auditory passage to the other, 8 inches.	From one auditory passage, around the head, to the other, 7½ inches.
Ear, 1⅞ inches.	Ditto, around the occiput, 5½ inches.
Facial angle, 65	Fronto, occipital curve, 8 inches.
	Ear, 2 inches.
	Facial Angle, 60.

Dr. W. remarked, that in appearance they were agreeable and intelligent, apt to comprehend, particularly if accompanied by proper gestures,—considering their degree of intelligence, he pronounced the size of the head the smallest that had come under his notice."

PROFILE ILLUSTRATIONS

FROM

CENTRAL AMERICAN RUINS,

OF

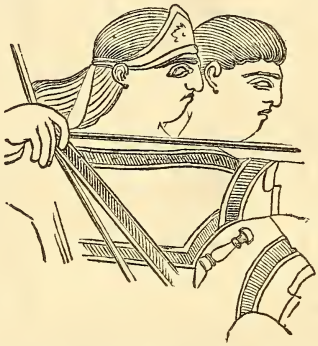
ANCIENT RACES STILL EXISTING IN IXIMAYA.

The above three figures, sketched from engravings in "Stevens's Central America," will be found, on personal comparison, to bear a remarkable and convincing resemblance, both in the general features and the position of the head, to the two living Aztec children, now exhibiting in the United States, of the ancient sacerdotal caste of *Kaanas*, or Pagan Mimes, of which a few individuals remain in the newly discovered city of Iximaya. See, the following *Memoir*, page 31.

These two figures, sketched from the same work, are said, by Senor Velasquez, in the unpublished portion of his narrative, to be "irresistible likenesses" of the equally exclusive but somewhat more numerous priestly caste

of *Mahaboons*, still existing in that city, and to which belonged Vaalpeor, the official guardian of those children, as mentioned in this memoir. Velasquez states that the likeness of Vaalpeor to the right hand figure in the frontispiece of Stevens' second volume, which is here also the one on the right hand, was as exact, in outline, as if the latter had been a daguerreotype miniature.

While writing his "Narrative" after his return to San Salvador, in the spring of the present year, (1850,) Senor Velasquez was favored, by an American gentleman of that city, with a copy of "Layard's Nineveh," and was forcibly struck with the close characteristic resemblance of the faces in many of its engravings to those of the inhabitants in general, as a peculiar family of mankind, both of Iximaya and its surrounding region. The following are sketches, (somewhat imperfect,) of two of the male faces to which he refers:



And the following profile, from the same work, is pronounced by Velasquez to be equally characteristic of the female faces of that region, making due allowance for the superb head dresses of tropical plumage, with which he describes the latter as being adorned, instead of the male galea, or close cap, retained in the engraving.

These illustrations, slight as they are, are deemed interesting, because the Iximayans assert their descent from a very ancient Assyrian colony nearly cotemporary with Nineveh itself—a claim which receives strong confirmation, not only from the hieroglyphics and monuments of Iximaya, but from the engravings in Stevens' volumes of several remarkable objects, (the inverted winged globe especially,) at Palenque—once a kindred colony.

It should have been stated in the following Memoir, that Senor Velasquez, on his return to San Salvador, caused the two Kaana children to be baptized into the Catholic Church, by the Bishop of the Diocess, under the names of Maximo and Bartola Velasquez.

MEMOIR

OF A RECENT

EVENTFUL EXPEDITION

IN

CENTRAL AMERICA.

In the second volume of his travels in Central America—than which no work ever published in this country, has created and maintained a higher degree of interest, both at home and abroad—Mr. Stevens speaks with enthusiasm of the conversations he had held with an intelligent and hospitable Padre, or Catholic priest, of Santa Cruz del Quiche, formerly of the village of Chajul; and of the exciting information he had received from him, concerning immense and marvellous antiquities in the surrounding country, which, to the present hour, remain entirely unknown to the world. The Padre told him of vast ruins, in a deserted and desolate region, but four leagues from Vera Paz, more extensive than Quiche itself; and of another ruined city, on the other side of the great traversing range of the Cordilleras, of which no account has been given. But the most stimulating story of all, was the existence of a *living* city, far on the other side of the great sierra, large and populous, occupied by Indians of the same character, and in precisely the same state, as those of the country neral, before the discovery of the continent and the desolating conquests of its invaders.

The Padre averred that, in younger days, he had climbed to the topmost ridge of the seirra, a height of 10 or 12,000 feet, and from its naked summit, looking over an immense plain, extending to Yucatan and the Gulf of Mexico, had seen, with his own eyes, in the remote distance, "a large city, spread over a great space, with turrets white and glittering in the sun." His

account of the prevalent Indian report concerning it was, that no white man had ever reached that city; that the inhabitants, who speak the Maya language, are aware that a race of white strangers has conquered the whole country around them, and have hence murdered every white man that has since attemped to penetrate their territory. He added that they have no coin or other circulating medium; no horses, mules, or other domestic animals, except fowls, "and keep the cocks under ground to prevent their crowing being heard." This report of their slender resources for animal food, and of their perpetual apprehension of discovery, as indicated in this inadequate and childish expedient to prevent it, is, in most respects contradicted by that of the adventurous expedition about to be described, and which, having passed the walls of their city, obtained better information of their internal economy and condition than could have been acquired by any Indians at all likely to hold communication with places so very remote from the territory as Quiche or Chajul.

The effects of these extraordinary averments and recitals of the Padre, upon the mind of Mr. Stevens, together with the deliberate conclusions which he finally drew from them, is best expressed in his own language.

"The interest awakened in us, was the most thrilling I ever experienced. One look at that city, was worth ten years of an every day life. If he is right, a place is left where Indians and a city exist, as Cortez and Alvarado found them; there are living men who can solve the mystery that hangs over the ruined cities of America; who can, perhaps, go to Copan and read the inscriptions on its monuments. No subject more exciting and attractive presents itself to any mind, and the deep impression in my mind, will never be effaced.

"Can it be true? Being now in my sober senses, I do verily believe there is much ground to suppose that what the Padre told us is authentic. That the region referred to does not acknowledge the government of Gautamala, and has never been explored, and that no white man has ever pretended to have entered it; I am satisfied. From other sources we heard that a large *ruined* city was visible; and we were told of another person who had climbed to the top of the seirra, but on account of the dense clouds rasing upon it, he had not been able to see anything. At all events, the belief at the village of Chajul is general, and a curiosity is aroused that burns to be satisfied. We had a craving desire to reach the mysterious city. No man if ever so willing to peril his life, could undertake the enterprise, with any hope of success, without hovering for one or two years on the borders of the country,

studying the language and character of the adjoining Indians, and making acquaintance with some of the natives. Five hundred men could probably march directly to the city, and the invasion would be more justifiable than any made by Spaniards ; but the government is too much occupied with its own wars, and the knowledge could not be procured except at the price of blood. Two young men of good constitution, and who could afford to spend five years, might succeed. If the object of search prove a phantom, in the wild scenes of a new and unexplored country, there are other objects of interest ; but, if real, besides the glorious excitement of such a novelty, they will have something to look back upon through life. As to the dangers, they are always magnified, and, in general, peril is discovered soon enough for escape. But, in all probability, if any discovery is made, it will be made by the Padres. As for ourselves, to attempt it alone, ignorant of the language and with the mozos who were a constant annoyance to us, was out of the question. The most we thought of, was to climb to the top of the seirra, thence to look down upon the mysterious city ; but we had difficulties enough in the road before us ; it would add ten days to a journey already almost appalling in the perspective ; for days the sierra might be covered with clouds ; in attempting too much, we might lose all; Palenque was our great point, and we determined not to be diverted from the course we had marked out." Vol. II, p. 193–196.

It is now known that two intrepid young men, incited probably by this identical passage in Mr. Stevens's popular work—one a Mr. Huertis, of Baltimore, an American of Spanish parents, from Cuba, possessing an ample fortune, and who had travelled much in Egypt, Persia, and Syria, for the personal inspection of ancient monuments ; and the other, a Mr. Hammond, a civil-engineer from Canada, who had been engaged for some years on surveys in the United States, agreed to undertake the perilous and romantic enterprise thus cautiously suggested and chivalrously portrayed.

Amply equipped with every desirable appointment, including daguerreotype apparatuses, mathematical instruments, and withal fifty repeating rifles, lest it should become necessary to resort to an armed expedition, these gentlemen sailed from New-Orleans and arrived at Balize, in the fall of 1848. Here they procured horses, mules, and a party of ten experienced Indians and Mestitzos ; and after pursuing a route, through a wild, broken, and heavily wooded region, for about 150 miles, on the Gulf of Amatique, they struck off more to the south-west, for Coban, where they arrived on the morning of Christmas day, in time to

partake of the substantial enjoyments, as well as to observe the peculiar religious ceremonies, of the great Catholic festival, in that intensely interior city.

At this place, while loitering to procure information and guides for their future journey to Santa Cruz del Quiche, they got acquainted with Sr. Pedro Velasquez, of San Salvador, who describes himself as a man of family and education, although a trader in indigo; and his intermediate destination, prior to his return to the capital, happening also to be the same city, he kindly proffered to the two Americans his superior knowledge of the country, or any other useful service he could render them; and he was accordingly very gladly received as their friend and companion on the way. It is from a copy of a manscript journal of this gentleman, that the translator has obtained the only information as yet brought to the United States concerning the remarkable results of the exploring expedition which he will proceed to describe, or of the fate of Messrs. Huertis and Hammand, its unfortunate originators and conductors, or of those extraordinary living specimens of a *sui generis* race of beings, hitherto supposed to be either fabulous or extinct, which are at once its melancholy trophies and its physiological attestors. And it is from Senor Velasquez alone that the public can receive any further intelligence upon this ardently interesting subject, beyond that which his manuscript imperfectly affords.

In order, however, to avoid an anticipatory trespass upon the natural sequence of the narrative, it may be proper to state, that prior to his departure in their company from Coban, Senor Velasquez had received from his fellow travellers no intimation whatever concerning the ulterior object of their journey, and had neither seen nor heard of those volumes describing the stupendous vestages of ancient empire, in his native land, which had so strongly excited the emulous passion of discovery in their minds.

Frequently called by his mercantile speculations, which he seems to have conducted upon an extensive scale, to perform long journeys from San Salvador, on the Pacific side of the Cordilleras, to Comyagua in the mid-interior, and thence to Truxillo, Omoa, and Ysabal, on the Bay and Gulf of Honduras, he had traversed a large portion of the country, and had often been surprised with sudden views of mouldering temples, pyramids, and

cities of vast magnitude and marvellous mythology. And being, as it evidently appears, a man of unusual intelligence and scholastic acquirements, he had doubtless felt, as he states, a profound but hopeless curiosity concerning their origin and history. He had even seen and consecutively examined the numerous and ornate monuments of Copan; but it was not until he had proceded to the second stage of the journey from Coban to Quiche, that he was shown the engravings in the first volume of Stevens's Central America, in which they are so faithfully depicted. He recognized many of them as old acquaintances, and still more as new ones, which had escaped his more cursory inspection; and in all he could trace curious details which, on the spot, he regreted the want of time to examine. He, moreover, knew the surly Don Gregorio, by whom Mr. Stevens had been treated so inhospitably, and several other persons in the vicinity of the ruins whom he had named, and was delighted with the *vraisemblance* of his descriptions. The Senor confesses that these circumstances inspired him with unlimited confidence in that traveller's statements upon other subjects; and when Mr. Huertis read to him the further account of the information given to Mr. Stevens by the jolly and merry, but intelligent old Padre of Quiche, respecting other ruined cities beyond the Sierra Madre, and especially of the living city of independent Candones, or unchristianized Indians, supposed to have been seen from the lofty summit of that mountain range, and was told by Messrs. Huertis and Hammond that the exploration of this city was the chief object of their perilous expedition, the Senor adds, that his enthusiasm became enkindled to at least as high a fervor as theirs, and that, "with more precipitancy than prudence, in a man of his maturer years and important business pursuits, he resolved to unite in the enterprise, to aid the heroic young men with his experince in travel and knowledge of the wild Indians of the region referred to, and to see the end of the adventure, result as it may."

He was confirmed in this resolution by several concurring facts of which his companions were now told for the first time. He intimately knew and had several times been the guest of the worthy Cura of Quiche, from whom Mr. Stevens received assurances of the existence of the ruined city of the ancient Aztecs,

as well as the living city of the Candones, in the unsubjugated territory beyond the mountains. And he was induced to yield credence to the Padre's confident report of the latter, because his account of the former had already been verified, and become a matter of fact and of record. He, Senor Velasquez, himself, during the preceding summer, joined a party of several foreigners and natives in exploring an ancient ruined city, of prodigious grandeur and extent, in the province of Vera Paz, but little more than 150 miles to the east of Guatamala, (instead of nearly 200, as the Padre had supposed,) which far surpassed in magnificence every other ruin, as yet discovered, either in Central America or Mexico. It lay overgrown with huge timber in the midst of a dense forest, far remote from any settlement, and near the crater of a long extinct volcano, on whose perpendicular walls, 300 or 400 feet high, were aboriginal paintings of warlike and idolitrous processions, dances, and other ceremonies, exhibiting like the architectural sculptures on the temples, a state of advancement in the arts incomparably superior to all previous examples. And as the good Padre had proved veracious and accurate on this matter, which he knew from personal observation, the Senor would not uncharitably doubt his veracity on a subject in which he again professed to speak from the evidence of his own eye-sight.

The party thus re-assured, and more exhilarated than ever with the prospect of success, proceeded on their journey with renewed vigor. Although the Senor modestly abstains from any allusion to the subject, in the MSS. which have reached us, it cannot be doubted that Messrs. Huertis and Hammond considered him an invaluble accession to their party. He was a guide on whom they could rely ; he was acquainted with the dialects of many of the Indian tribes through which they would have to pass ; was familiar with the principal stages and villages on their route, and knew both the places and persons from whence the best information, if any, concerning the paramount object of their journey, could be obtained.

It appears, also, from an incidental remark in his journal, that Senor Velasquez would have been at their right hand in a fight, in the event of any hostile obstruction on their way. As a volunteer, he had held a command under Morazan, during the

sanguinary conflicts of the republic, and had been a soldier through several of the most arduous campaigns, in the fierce struggle between the general and Carrera. He was thus, appa rently, in all respects, precisely such an auxiliary as they would have besought Providence to afford them, to accomplish the hazardous enterprise they had so daringly projected and commenced.

Unfortunately for the public, the Senor's journal, fragmentary throughout, is especially megre concerning the incidents of travel between the capital of Vera Paz and Santa Cruz del Quiche. At this period he appears to have left the task of recording them almost entirely to his two friends, whose memoranda, in all probability, are forever lost. Some of those incidents appear, even from his brief minutes of them, to have been of the most imminent and critical importance. Thus under the date of February 2nd, 1849, he says, "on the bank of a branch of the Salamo, attacked in the night by about thirty Indian robbers, several of whom had fire-arms. Sr. Hammond, sitting within the light of the fire, was severely wounded through the left shoulder ; they had followed us from the hacienda, six leagues, passed us to the north and lay in ambush ; killed four, wounded three ; of the rest saw no more ; poor Juan, shot through the body, died this morning ; lost two mules."

After this, there is nothing written until the 16th, when they had arrived at a place called San Jose, where he says, "Good beef and fowls ; Sr. Huertis much better ; Sr. Hammond very low in intermittent fever ; fresh mules and good ones." Next on the 5th of March, at the Indian village of Axitzel, is written, "Detained here five days ; Hammond, strong and headstrong. Agree with Huertis that, to be safe, we must wait with patience the return of the good Cura." Slight and tantalizing memoranda of this kind occur, irregularly, until April 3rd, when we find the party safely arrived at Quiche, and comfortably accommodated in a convent. The joval Padre, already often mentined, who may be regarded as the unconscious father of the expedition, had become helplessly, if not hopelessly, dropsical, and lost much of his wanted jocosity. He declared, however, that Senor Velasquez's description of the ruins explored the previous summer, recalling as it did his own profoundly impressed recollection of them, when he walked through their desolate avenues

and deserted palaces; and corroborating as it did, in every particular, his own reiterated account of them, which he had often bestowed upon incredulous and unworthy ears, would "act like *cannabis* upon his bladder," as it already had upon his eyes; and if he could but live to see the description in print, so as to silence all gainsayers, he had no doubt it would completely cure him, and add many years to his life. He persisted in his story of the unknown city in the Candone wilderness, as seen by himself, nearly forty years ago, from the summit of the sierra; and promised the travellers a letter to his friend, the Cura of Gueguetenango, requesting him to procure them a guide to the very spot from whence they could behold it for themselves.

This promise, in the course of a few days, the Senor says, he faithfully performed, describing from recollection, by the hand of an amanuensis to whom he dictated, not only the more striking but even minute and peculiar landmarks for the guidance of the guide. On the 10th of April, the party, fully recruited in health and energy, set out for Totonicapan; and thence we trace them by the journal through a succession of small places to Quezaltenango, where they remained but two days; and thence through the places called Aguas Calientes, and San Sebastiano, to Gueguetenango; this portion of their route being described as one of unprecedented toil, danger, and exhaustion, from its mountainous character, accidents to men and mules, terrific weather and loss of provisions. Arrived, however, at length, at the town last named, which they justly regarded as an eminently critical stage of their destiny, they found the Cura, and presented him with the letter of introduction from his friend, the Padre of Quiche. They were somewhat discouraged on perceiving that the Cura indicated but little confidence in the accuracy of his old friend's memory, and asked them rather abruptly, if they thought him really serious in his belief in his distant vision of an unknown city from the sierra, because, for his own part, he had always regarded the story as one of Padre's broadest jokes, and especially since he had never heard of any other person possessing equal visual powers. "The mountain was high, it is true, but not much more than half as high as the hyperbolous memory of his reverend friend had made it, and he much feared that the Padre, in the course of forty years, had so frequently repeated a picture of his early imagination as to have,

at length, cherished it as a realitity." This was said in smooth and elegant Spanish, but says the Senor, "with an air of dignified sarcasm upon our credulity, which was far from being agreeable to men broken down and dispirited, by almost incredible toil, in pursuit of an object thus loftily pronounced a rediculous phantom of the brain." This part of Senor Velasquez's journal being interesting and carefully written, we give the following translation without abridgement :—

"The Cura, nevertheless, on finding that his supercilious scepticism had not proved so infectious among us as he expected and that we were rather vexed than vacillating, offered to procure us guides in the course of a day or two, who were familiar with many parts of the sierra, and who, for good pay, he doubted not, would flatter our expectations to the utmost extent we could desire. He advised us, however, in the same style of caustic dissuasion, to take with us both a barometer and a telescope, if we were provided with those instruments, because the latter, especially, might be found useful in discovering the unknown city, and the former would not only inform us of the height of the mountain, but of the weather in prospect most favorable to a distant view. Senor Huertis replied that such precautions would be adopted, as a matter of course, and would, moreover, furnish him, on our return to Gueguetenango, with the exact latitude and longitude of the spot from which the discovery might be made. He laughed very heartily and rejoined that he thought this operation would be much easier than to furnish the same interesting particulars concerning the location of the spots at which the discovery might fail to be made; and saying this he robed himself for mass, which we all, rather sullenly, attended.

"Next morning, two good looking Meztitzos, brothers, waited on us with a strong letter of recommendation from the Cura, as guides to that region of the sierra which the Padre's letter had so particularly described, and which description, the Cura added, he had taken much pains to make them understand. On being questioned concerning it, they startled and somewhat disconcerted us by calm assurances, in very fair Spanish, that they were not only familiar with all the land-marks, great and small, which the Cura had read to them, but had several times seen the very city of which we were in search, although none but full-blooded Indians had ever ventured on a journey to it. This was rather too much, even for us, sanguine and confiding as we were. We shared a common suspicion that the Cura had changed his tactics, and resolved to play a practical joke upon our credulity—to send us on a fool's errand and laugh at us for our pains. That he had been tampering with the two guides for this purpose, struck us forcibly ; for while he professed never to have known any man who had seen the distant city, he recommended these

Meztitzos, as brothers, whom he had known from their boyhood, they declared they had beheld it from the sierra on various occasions. Nevertheless, Senor Huertis believed that the young men spoke the truth, while the Cura, probably, did not; and hoping to catch him in his own snare, if such had been laid, asked the guides their terms, which, though high, he agreed to at once, without cavil. They said it would take us eight days to reach the part of the sierra described in the letter, and that we might have to wait on the summit several days more, before the weather would afford a clear view. They would be ready in two days; they had just returned across the mountains from San Antonia de Guista, and needed rest and repairs. There was a frankness and simplicity about these fine fellows which would bear the severest scrutiny, and we could only admit the bare possibility of our being mistaken.

"It took us three days, however, to procure a full supply of the proper kind of provisions for a fortnight's abode in the sky, and on the fourth, (May 5th,) we paid our formal respects to the Cura, and started for the ascent—he not forgetting to remind us of the promise to report to him the precise geographical locality of our discovery."

The journal is again blank until May 9th, when the writer says, "Our altitude, by barometer, this morning, is over 6000 feet above the valley which we crossed three days ago; the view of it and its surrounding mountains, sublime with chasms, yet grotesque in outline, and all heavily guilded with the setting sun, is one of the most oppressively gorgeous I ever beheld. The guides inform us that we have but 3000 feet more to ascend, and point to the gigantic pinacle before us, at the apparent distance of seven or eight leagues; but that, before we can reach it, we have to descend and ascend an immense barranca, (ravine,) nearly a thousand feet deep from our present level, and of so difficult a passage that it will cost us several days. The side of the mountain towards the north-west, is perfectly flat and perpendicular for more than half its entire height, as if the prodigious section had been riven down by the sword of the San Miguel, and hurled with his foot among the struggling multitude of summits below. So far, the old Padre is accurate in every particular." In a note opposite this extract, written perpendicularly on the margin of the manuscript, the writer says, "The average breadth of the plain on this ridge of the sierra, (that is the ridge on which they were then encamped for the night,) is nearly half a mile, and exhibits before us a fine rolling track as far as we can see. Neither birds, beasts, nor insects—I would

there were no such barranca !" On the tenth he says, " on the brink of the abyss—the heaviest crags we can hurl down, return no sound from the bottom."

The next entry in the journal is dated May 15th.—" Recovered the body of Sebastiano and the load of his mule ; his brother is building a cross for his grave, and will not leave it until famished with thirst and hunger. All too exhausted to think of leaving this our first encampment since we descended. Present elevation but little above that of the opposite ridge which we left on the 11th, still, at least 3000 feet to climb." On the 19th, 4 o'clock, P. M., he records, " Myself, Sr. Hammond and Antonio, on the highest summit, an inclined plain of bare rock, of about fifteen acres. The Padre again right. Sr. Huertis and others just discernable, but bravely coming on. Elevation, 9,500 feet. Completely in the clouds, and all the country below invisible. Senor Hammond already bleeding at the nose, and no cigar to stop it." At 10 o'clock, the same night, he writes, " All comfortably asleep but myself and Sr. Hammond, who is going to take the latitude." Then follows, " He finds the latitude 15 degrees and 48 minutes *north*." Opposite this, in the margin is written, " the mean result of three observations of different stars. Intend to take the longitude to-morrow." Next day, the 20th, he says, " A bright and most auspicious morning, and all, but poor Antonio, in fine health and feeling. The wind by compass, N. E., and rolling away a billowy ocean of mist, toward, I suppose, the Bay of Honduras. Antonio says the Pacific will be visible within an hour ; (present time not given) more and more of the lower mountians becoming clear every moment. Fancy we already see the Pacific, a faint yellow plain, almost as elevated as ourselves. Can see part of the State of Chiapas pretty distinctly." At 12 o'clock, meridian, he says, " Sr. Hammond is taking the longitude, but finds a difference of several minutes between his excellent watch and chronometer, and fears the latter has been shaken. Both the watch and its owner, however, have been a great deal more shaken, for the chronometer has been all the time in the midst of a thick blanket, and has had no falls. Sr. Huertis, with the glass, sees whole lines and groups of pyramids, in Chiapas. At 1 o'clock, P. M. he records, " Sr. Hammond reports the longitude, 92 degrees 15

minutes *west*. Brave Huertis is in ecstacy with some discovery, but will not part with the glass for a moment. No doubt it is the Padre's city, for it is precisely in the direction he indicated. Antonio says he can see it with his naked eye, although less distinctly than heretofore. I can only see a white straight line, like a ledge of limbstone rock, on an elevated plain, at least twenty leagues distant, in the midst of a vast amphitheatre of hills, to the north east of our position, toward the State of Yucatan. Still, it is no doubt the place the Padre saw, and it may be a great city."

At 2 o'clock P. M., he says "All doubt is at an end! We have all seen it through the glass, as distinctly as though it were but a few leagues off, and it is now clear and bright to the unaided eye. It is unquestionably a richly monumented city, of vast dimensions, within lofty parapetted walls, three or four miles square, inclined inward in the Egyptian style, and its interior domes and turrets have an emphatically oriental aspect. I should judge it to be not more than twenty-five leagues from Ocosingo, to the eastward, and nearly in the same latitude; and this would probably be the best point from which to reach it, travelling due east, although the course of the river Legartos seems to lead directly to it. That it is still an inhabited place, is evident from the domes of its temples, or churches. Christian churches they cannot be, for such a city would have an Aarchbishop and be well known to the civilized world. It must be a Pagan strong-hold that escaped the conquest by its remote position, and the general retreat, retirement, and centralizing seclusion of its surrounding population. It may now be opened to the light of the true faith."

They commenced their descent the same day, and rested at night on the place of their previous encampment, a narrow shelf of the sierra. Here, on the brink of the terrible ravine, which they had again to encounter, they consulted upon a plan for their future operations; and it was finally agreed that Messrs. Huertis and Hammond, with Antonio, and such of the Indian muleteers as could be induced to proceed with the expedition, should follow the bottom of the ravine, in its north-east course, in which, according to Antonio, the river Legartos took its principal supply of water, and remain at a large village, adjacent to its banks,

which they had seen, about five leagues distant ; while Senor Velasquez was to trace their late route, by way of Gueguctenango, to Guezaltenango, where all the surplus arms and amuni tion had been deposited, and recruit a strong party of Indians, to serve as a guard, in the event of an attack from the people of the unexplored region, whither they were resolutely bound. In the meantime, Antonio was to return home to Gueguetenango, await the return of Velasquez, with his armed party, from Guezaltenango, and conduct them over the mountains to the village on the plains, where Messrs. Huertis and Hammond were to remain until they should arrive. It appears that Senor Velasquez was abundantly supplied with solid funds for the recruiting service, and that Mr. Huertis also furnished Antonio with a liberal sum, in addition to his stipulated pay, wherewith to procure masses for the repose of his unfortunate brother.

Of the adventures of Messrs. Huertis and Hammond, in the long interval prior to the return of Velasquez, we have no account whatever ; nor does the journal of the latter contain any remarks relative to his own operations, during the same period. The next date is July the 8th, when we find him safely arrived with " nearly all the men he had engaged," at an Indian village called Aguamasinta, where his anxious companions were overjoyed to receive him, and where " they had obtained inestimable information regarding the proper arrangement of the final purpose." After this we trace them, by brief memoranda, for a few days, on the devious course of the Legartos, when the journal abruptly and finally closes. The remaining narrative of the expedition was written by Senor Velasquez from memory, after his return to San Salvador, while all the exciting events and scenes which it describes were vividly sustained by the feelings which they originally inspired. As this excessively interesting document will be translated for the public press as soon as the necessary consent of its present proprietor can be obtained, the writer of this pamphlet the less regrets the very limited use of it to which he is now restricted—which is but little more than that of making a mere abridgement and connexion of such incidents as may serve to explain the orign and possession of those *sui generis* specimens of humanity, the Aztec brother and sister, now exhibiting to the public, in the United States. From the

introductory paragraphs, we take the liberty to quote the following without abridgement :—

" Our latitude and longitude was now 16 ° 42' N. and 91 ° 35' W ; so that the grand amphitheatre of hills, forming three fourths of an oval outline of jagged summits, a few leagues before us, most probably inclosed the mysterious object of our anxious and uncertain labors. The small groups of Indians through which we had passed, in the course of the day, had evidently been startled by sheer astonishment, into a sort of passive and involuntary hospitality, but maintained a stark apprehensive reserve in most of their answers to our questions. They spoke a peculiar dialect of the Maya, which I had never heard before, and had great difficulty in comprehending, although several of the Mayua Indians of our party understood it familiarly and spoke it fluently. From them we learned that they had never seen men of our race before, but that a man of the same race as Senor Hammond, who was of a bright-florid complexion, with light hair and red whiskers, had been sacrificed and eaten by the Macbenachs, or priests of Iximaya, the great city among the hills, about thirty moons ago. Our interpeters stated that the word " Iximaya " meant the " Great Centre," and that " Macbenach " meant the " Great Son of the Sun." I at once resolved to make the most of my time in learning as much as possible of this dialect from these men, because they said it was the tongue spoken by the people of Iximaya and the surrounding region. It appeared to me to be merely a provinical corruption, or local peculiarism, of the great body of the Maya language, with which I was already acquainted ; and, in the course of the next day's conversation, I found that I could acquire it with much facility."

To this circumstance the writer is probably indebted for his life. In another day, the determined explorers had come within the circuit of the alpine district in which Iximaya is situated, and found it reposing, in massive grandeur, in the centre of a perfectly level plain, about five leagues in diameter, at a distance of scarcely two from the spot they had reached. At the base of all the mountains, rising upon their sides, and extending nearly a mile inward upon the plain, was a dark green forest of colossal trees and florid shrubbery, girding it around ; while the even valley itself exhibited large tracts of uncultivated fields, fenced in with palisades, and regular, even to monotony, both in size and form. " Large herds of deer, cattle, and horses, were seen in the openings of the forest, and dispersed over the plain, which was also studded with low flat-roofed dwellings of stone, in small detached clusters, or hamlets. Rich patches of forest, of irregular forms, bordered with gigantic aloes, diversified the landscape

in effective contrast with bright lakes of water which glowed among them."

While the whole party, with their cavalcade of mules and baggage were gazing upon the scene, two horsemen, in bright blue and yellow tunics, and wearing turbans decorated with three large plumes of the quezal, dashed by them from the forest, at the distance of about two hundred yards, on steeds of the highest Spanish mould, followed by a long retinue of athletic Indians, equally well mounted, clothed in brilliant red tunics, with caronals of gay feathers, closely arranged within a band of blue cloth Each horseman carried a long spear, pointed with a polished metal ; and each held, in a leash, a brace of pewerful blood-hounds, which were also of the purest Spanish breed. The two leaders of this troop, who were Indians of commanding air and stature, suddenly wheeled their horses and glared upon the large party of intruders with fixed amazement. Their followers evinced equal surprise, but forgot not to draw up in good military array, while the blood-hounds leapt and raged in their thongs.

" While the leaders," says Senor Velasquez, "seemed to be intently scrutenizing every individual of our company, as if silently debating the policy of an immediate attack, one of the Maya Indians, of whom I had been learning the dialect, stepped forward and informed us that they were a detachment of rural guards, a very numerous military force, which had been appointed from time immemorial, or, at least from the time of the Spaniah invasion, to hunt down and capture all strangers of a foreign race that should be found within a circle of twelve leagues of the city; and he repeated the statement made to us from the beginning, that no white man had hitherto eluded their vigilance or left their city alive. He said there was a tradition that many of the pioneers of Alvarado's army had been cut off in this manner, and never heard of more, while their skulls and weapons are to this day suspended round the altars of the pagan gods. He added, finally, that if we wished to escape the same fate, now was our only chance ; that as we numbered thirty-five, all armed with repeating rifles, we could easily destroy the present detachment, which amounted to but fifty, and secure our retreat before another could come up ; but that, in order to do this, it was necessary first to shoot the dogs, which all our Indians regarded with the utmost dread and horror.

I instantly felt the force of this advice, in which, also, I was sustained by Senor Hammond ; but Senor Huertis, whom, as the leader of the expedition, we were all bound and solemly pledged to obey ; utterly rejected the proposition. He had come so far to see the city and see it he would, whether taken thither

as a captive or not, and whether he ever returned from it or not; that this was the contract originally proposed, and to which I had assented; that the fine troop before us was evidently not a gang of savages, but a body of civilized men and good soldiers; and as to the dogs, they were noble animals of the highest blood he ever saw. If, however, I and his friend Hammond, who seemed afraid of being eaten, in preference to the fine beef and venison which we had seen in such profusion on the plain, really felt alarmed at the bugbear legends of our vagabond Indians, before any demonstration of hostility had been made, we were welcome to take two-thirds of the men and mules and make our retreat as best we could, while he would advance with Antonio and the remainder of the party, to the gates of the city, and demand a peaceable admission. I could not but admire the romantic intrepidity of this resolve, though I doubted its discretion; and assured him I was ready to follow his example and share his fate.

" While this conversation was passing among us, the Indian commanders held a conference apparently as grave and important. But just as Senor Huertis and myself had agreed to advance towards them for a parley, they separated without deigning a reply to our salution—the elder and more highly decorated, galloped off towards the city with a small escort, while the other briskly crossed our front at the head of his squadron and entered the forest nearer the entrance of the valley. This opening in the hills, was scarcely a quarter of a mile wide, and but a few minutes elapsed before we saw a single horseman cross it toward the wood on the opposite side. Presently, another troop of horse of the same uniform appearance as the first, were seen passing a glade of the wood which the single horseman had penetrated, and it thus became evident that a manœure had already been effected to cut off our retreat. The mountains surrounding the whole area of the plain, were absolutely perpendicular for three-fourths of their altitude, which was no where less than a thousand feet; and from many parts of their wildly piled outline, huge crags projected in monstrous mammoth forms, as if to plunge to the billows of forest beneath. At no point of this vast impassible boundary was there a chasm or declivity discernable by which we could make our exit, exeept the one thus formidably intercepted.

"To retire into the forest and water our mules at a copious stream which rushed forth from its recesses, and recruit our own exhausted strength with food and rest, was our first necessary resource. In tracing the rocky course of the current for a convenient watering place, Antonio discovered that it issued from a cavern, which, though a mere fissure exteriorly, was, within, of cathedral dimensions and solemnity; we all entered it and drank eagerly from a foaming basin, which it immediately presented to our fevered lips. Our first sensations were those of freedom and

independence, and of that perfect security which is the basis of both. It was long since we had slept under a roof of any kind, while here a few men could defend our repose against an assault from thousands; but it was horribly evident, to my mind, that a few watchful assailants would suffice to reduce us to starvation, or destroy us in detail. Our security was that of a prison, and our freedom was limited to its walls. Happily, however, for the present hour, this reflection seemed to trouble no one. Objects of wonder and veneration grew numerous to our gaze. Gigantic statues of ancient warriors, with round shields, arched helmets, and square breast-plates, curiously latticed and adorned, stood sculptured in high relief, with grave faces and massive limbs, and in the regular order of columns around the walls of this grand mausoleum. Many of them stood arrayed in the crimson of the setting sun, which then flamed through the tall fissure into the cavern; and the deep gloom into which long rows of others utterly retired from our view, presented a scene at once of mingled mystery and splendor. It was evidently a place of great and recent resort, both for men and horses, for plentiful supplies of fresh fodder for the latter were heaped in stone recesses; while the ashes of numerous fires, mingled with discarded mocassins and broken pipes and pottery, attested a domiciliary occupation by the former. Farther into the interior, were found seats and sleeping-couches of fine cane work; and in a spacious recess, near the entrance, a large collection of the bones, both of the ox and the deer, with hides, also, of both, but newly flayed and suspended on pegs by the horns. These last evidences of good living had more effect upon our hungry Indians than all the rest, and within an hour after dark, while we were seeking our first sleep, four fine deer were brought in by about a dozen of our party, whom we supposed to have been faithfully guarding our citadel. It is unnecessary to say that we gladly arose to the rich repast that ensued, for we had eaten nothing but our scant allowance of tortillas for many days, and were in the lassitude of famine."

Tempting as such extracts are, we must avoid them, and hasten through a summary of subsequent events. There is one singular incident, however, mentioned in the passage immediately following the above, possessing too important a connexion with the final catastrophe to be pretermitted at this place. Mr. Hammond, the Canadian engineer, fearing that the peculiarity of his appearance, as a man of fair and ruddy complexion, among a swarthy race, would subject him to great annoyance, and perhaps involve him in the horrible fate of a similar person, reported by the Indians, resolved to stain his skin of a darker hue, by means of some chemical preparation which he had precautionarily provided for this purpose, before he left the United States. With

the friendly assistance of Antonio, this metamorphosis was completed over his whole person before he retired to rest; his red whiskers were shaved off, and his light hair died of a jet black; and so perfect was the disguise, that not one of the party who went foraging for venison recognized him on their return, but marvelled, as he sat at supper, whence so singular a stranger could have come. Velasquez states, however, that his new complexion was unlike that of any human being on the face of the earth, and scarcely diminished the certainty of his becoming an object of curiosity, among an Indian population.

In the morning, about the break of day, the infernal yells of a pack of blood-hounds suddenly rang through the cavern, and the party could scarcely seize their rifles before many of the dogs, who had driven in the affrighted Indians on guard, were springing at their throats. Mr. Huertis, however, the American leader of the expedition, with that presence of mind which seems always to have distinguished him, told the men that rifles were useless in such a contest, and that the hounds must be dispatched with their long knives as fast as they came in, while the fire-arms were to be reserved for their masters. This canine butchery was accomplished with but little difficulty; none of the party received any serious injury from their fangs; and the Indians were exhilarated with a victory which was chiefly a conquest of their fears. These unfortunate dogs, it appears, were the advanced van of a pack, or perhaps merely a few unleashed as scouts to others held in reserve; for no more were seen or heard for sometime. Meanwhile, Mr. Huertis seems to have struck out a brilliant scheme. He collected his whole party into that obscure branch of the cavern, near its entrance, which has been described as a depository of animal bones, and ordering them to sling their rifles at their backs, bade them stand ready with their knives. Almost instantly, they observed a party of ten dismounted natives, in scarlet tunics, and armed with spears, enter the cavern in single file; and, it would seem, from seeing the dogs slain and no enemy in sight, they rushed out again, without venturing on farther search. In a few minutes, however, they returned with forty or fifty more, in the same uniform, headed by the younger of the two personages whom they had seen in command the previous evening. As soon as they were well advanced into the

cavern, and heard disturbing the tired mules, Mr. Huertis and his party marched quietly out and seized their horses, which were picketed close by, in charge of two or three men, whom they disarmed. At a short distance, however, drawn up in good order, was another squadron of horses, which Mr. Huertis determined instantly to charge. Ordering his whole party to mount the noble stallions they had captured, and reserve their fire until he gave the word, he, Velasquez, and Hammond, drew the short sabres they had worn on their march, and led the attack. The uninformed natives, however, did not wait the encounter, but scattered in wonderment and consternation; doubtless under the impression that all their comrades had been slain. But the rapid approach of a much larger force—which is found, eventually, to have consisted of two detachments of fifty each, being just twice their number—speedily reassured them, and falling in line with this powerful reinforcement, the whole hundred and fifty charged upon our comparative handful of travellers, at a rapid pace. Huertis promptly ordered his little party to halt, and form in line, two deep, with presented arms; and doubtless feeling that, notwithstanding the disparity of numbers, the enemy, armed only with spears and small side-hatchets, held but a slender chance of victory over a party of thirty-eight—most of them old campaigners in the sanguinary expeditions of the terrible Carrera—armed with new "six-shooting" rifles and long knives, generously commanded them to keep aim upon the horses only, until further orders. In the meantime, most of their plumed opponents, instead of using their long spears as in lance practice, threw them through the air from so great a distance that nearly all fell short of the mark—an infallible indication both of timidity and inexperience in action. The unfortunate Mr. Hammond, however, was pierced through the right breast, and another of the party was killed by being transfixed through the bowels. At this instant Huertis gave the word to fire; and, at the next, no small number of the enemy were rolling upon the sod, amid their plunging horses. A second rapid, but well delivered volley, brought down as many more, when the rest, in attitudes of frantic wonder and terror, unconsciously dropped their weapons and fled like affrighted fowls under the sudden swoop of the kite. Their dispersion was so outrageously wild and complete that no two of them could be seen together as they radiated over the plain. The

men and horses seemed impelled alike by a preternatural panic; and neither Cortez in Mexico, nor Pizarro in Peru, ever witnessed greater consternation at fire-arms among a people, who, for the first time, beheld their phenomena and effects—when mere hundreds of invaders easily subjugated millions of natives chiefly by this appalling influence—than was manifested by these Iximayans on this occasion. Indeed, it appears that these primitive and isolated people, holding no intercourse whatever with the rest of mankind, were as ignorant as their ancestors even of the existence of this kind of weapons; and although their modern hieroglyphical annals were found to contain vague allusions to the use of them in the conquest of the surrounding country, by means of a peculiar kind of thunder and lightning, and several old Spanish muskets and pistols were found in their scant collection of foreign curiosities, yet, not even the most learned of their priests had retained the slightest notion of the uses for which they were designed.

While this summary conflict was enacted on the open lawn of the forest, the dismounted company in the cavern having completed their fruitless search for the fugitives, emerged from its portal with all the mules and baggage, just in time to see and hear the fiery explosions of the rifles and their effect upon the whole body of scarlet cavalry. The entire scene, including the mounted possession of their horses by uncouthly attired strangers, previously invisible, must have appeared to these terror-stricken natives an achievement of supernatural beings. And when Mr. Huertis wheeled his obstreperously laughing party to recover his mules, he found most of the astounded men prostrated upon their faces, while others, more self-possessed, knelt upon the bended knee, and, with drooping heads, crossed their hands behind them to receive the bonds of captives. Their gallant and gaily accoutred young chieftain, however, though equally astonished and dismayed, merely surrendered his javelin as an officer would his sword, under the like circumstances, in civilized warfare. But, with admirable tact and forethought, Huertis declined to accept it, immediately returning it with the most profound and deferential cordiality of manner. He at the same time informed him, through Velasquez, that, though strangers, his party were not enemies but friendly visiters, who, after a long and painful

journey, again to be pursued, desired the temporary hospitality of his countrymen in their magnificent city.

The young chief replied, with evident discomposure and concern, that his countrymen showed no hospitality to strangers, it being interdicted by their laws and punishable with death; that the inhabitants of their city held intercourse only with the population of the surrounding valley, who were restricted alike by law and by patriotism from ever leaving its confines; he and his fellow soldiers alone being privileged to visit the neighboring regions for the purpose of arresting intruders, (*cowana*,) and escorting certain kind of merchandize which they exchanged with a people of their own race in an adjoining district. He added, with much eloquence of manner, and as Velasquez believed, of language, which he but partially understood, that the independence and peace of his nation, who were a peaceful and happy people, depended upon these severe restrictions, which indeed had been the only means of preserving it, while all the country besides, from sea to sea, had bowed to a foreign yoke, and seen their ancient cities, once the seats and centres of mighty empires, overgrown with forest, and the temples of their gods demolished.

He further added, says Velasquez, in a very subdued but significant tone, that some few strangers, it was true, had been taken to the city by its guards in the course of many generations, but that none of them had been allowed an opportunity of betraying its existence and locality to the cruel rapacity of the foreign race. He concluded by earnestly entreating them, since he could not compel them as prisoners, to enter the city as friends, with the view of residing there for life; promising them wives, and dwellings, and honors; for even now, if they attempted to retreat, they would be overtaken by thousands of armed men on fleet horses, that would overpower them by their numbers and subject them to a very different fate.

Mr. Huertis rejoined, through the same interpreter, that he could destroy any number of armed men, on the swiftest horses, before they could approach him, as the chief had already seen; and since he could enforce his exit from the city whenever he thought proper, he would enter it upon his own terms, either as a conqueror, or as a friend, according to the reception he met with; that there was now no race of conquerors to whom the city

could be betrayed, even if he were disposed to do so, as the people of the whole country, of all races, were now living in a state of perfect freedom and equality; and that, therefore, there was no necessity for those unsocial and sanguinary laws which secluded the Iximayans from friendly intercourse with their fellowmen. Saying which, and without waiting for further colloquy, he ordered his party to dismount, restore the horses to their owners, and march with the train of mules toward the city, in the usual style of travel. With this order, his Indians complied very reluctantly, but on assuring them that it was a matter of the highest policy, they evinced their wonted confidence in his judgment and ability. To the young chief he restored his own richly caparisoned steed, which had fallen to the lot of the unfortunate Mr. Hammond, who was now lying desperately wounded, in the care of the faithful Antonio. For himself and Senor Velasquez, Mr. Huertis retained the horses they had first seized, and placing themselves on each side of the Iximayan commander, with their friend Hammond borne immediately behind them, in one of the cane couches of the cavern, on the backs of two mules yoked together, they advanced to the head of their party, while the red troopers, followed by the surviving bloodhounds leashed in couples, brought up the rear. Huertis, however, had taken the precaution to add the spears and hatchets of these men to the burdens of the forward mules, to abide the event of his reception at the city gates. The appearance of the whole cavalcade must have been unique and picturesque; for Velasquez informs us, that while he wore the uniform of a military company to which he belonged in San Salvador, much enhanced in effect by some brilliant additions, and crowned with a broad sombrero and plume, Huertis wore that of an American naval commander, with gold epaulettes; his riflemen and muleteers generally were clothed in blue cotton and grass hats, while the native cavalry, in the brilliant tunics and feathered coronals, already described, must have completed the diversity of the variegated cortege. Had poor Hammond been mounted among them, his costume would have been as equivocal as his new complexion, for he had attired himself in the scarlet coat of a British officer of rank, with several blazing stars of glass jewels, surmounted by a white Panama hat, in which clustered an airy profusion of ladies' ostrich feathers, dyed blue at the edges.

In passing the spot of the recent skirmish, they found that nine horses and two men had been killed, the latter unintentionally, besides the rifleman of their own party. Many other horses were lying wounded, in the struggles of death, and several of their riders were seated on the ground, disabled by bruises or dislocations. Huertis' men buried their comrades in a grave hastily dug with the spears which lay around him, while the Iximayans laid their dead and wounded upon horses, to be conveyed to a village on the plain. The former, it was found, were consumed there the next day, in funereal fires, with idolatrous rites; and it was observed by the travellers that the native soldiers regarded their dead with emotions of extreme sensibility, and almost feminine grief, like men wholly unaccustomed to scenes of violent death. But Velasquez remarks, that the strongest emotion evinced by the young chief, throughout their intercourse, was when he heard the word "Iximaya," in interpreting for Huertis. He then seemed to be smitten and subdued, by blank despair, as if he felt that the city and its location were already familiarly known to the foreign world.

As already intimated, the distance to the city was about six miles. The expedition found the road to it bordered, on either side, as far as the eye could reach, with a profuse and valuable vegetation, the result of evidently assiduous and skilful culture. Indigo, corn, oats, a curious five-eared wheat, gourds, pine-apples esculent roots, pulse, flax, and hemp, the white as well as the crimson cotton, vineyards, and fruit orchards, grew luxuriantly in large, regularly divided fields, which were now ripe for the harvest. The villages, large and populous, were mostly composed of flat-roofed dwellings with broad overhanging eaves or architraves, supported by heavy columns, often filletted over spiral flutings, in the Egyptian style, and generally terminating in foliaged capitals, of the same character. None of the houses were mean, while many were superb; and of the mosque-like larger buildings, which occasionally appeared, and which were supposed to be rural temples, some were grand and imposing. A profusion of bold sculpture, was the prevailing characteristic, and perhaps defect, of all. The inhabitants, who thronged the wayside in great numbers, appeared excited with surprise and exultation, on beholding the large company of strangers apparently in the custody of their military, while the disarmed condition of

the latter, and the bodies of the slain, were a mystery they could not explain. Many of the husbandmen were observed to be in possession of bows and arrows, and some of the women held rusty spears. The predominant costume of both sexes was a pale blue tunic, gathered in at the breast and descending to the knee, with reticulated buskins, of red cord, covering the calf of the leg. The women, with few exceptions, were of fine form, and the highest order of Indian beauty, with an extraordinary affluence of black hair, tastefully disposed, and decorated with plumes and flowers. At the village where the dead and wounded were left, with their relatives and friends, doleful lamentations were heard, until the expedition approached the city.

The walls of this metropolis were sixty feet high, sloping inward from the foundation, surmounted by a parapet which overhung in a concave curve and rested upon a plain moulding. They were evidently a massive work of a remote period, for although constructed of large blocks of granitic stone, white and glittering in the sun, passing ages had corroded rough crevices between the layers, and the once perfect cornices had become indented by the tooth of time. The sculptured annals of the city recorded them an antiquity of four thousand years. They formed a parallelogram four miles long and three in width, thus inclosing an area of nearly twelve square miles, and they breasted the cardinal points of the horizon with a single gate, or propylon, midway on every side. On approaching the eastern gate, the travellers discovered that the foundations of the walls were laid in a deep foss or moat a hundred feet wide, nearly full to its brink and abounding with water-fowl. It was replenished from the mountains, and discharged its surplus waters into the lakes of the valley. It was to be crossed by a draw-bridge now raised over the gate, and the parapet was thronged with the populace to behold the entrance of so large a number of strangers for whom there was no return.

At a signal from the young chief, the bridge slowly descended and the cavalcade passed over ; but the folding gates, which were composed of blocks of stone curiously dovetailed together, and which revolved upon hinges of the same material by a ball and socket contrivance above and below, were not yet opened, and the party were detained on the bridge. A small oval orifice

only appeared, less than a human face, and a ear was applied there to receive an expected word in a whisper. This complied with, the ponderous gates unfolded, and a vista of solemn magnificence was presented to the view. It was a vista at once of colossal statues and trees, interminable in perspective and extending, as it was found, the whole length of the city to its western gate. Incredible as it may be, until we reflect upon the ancient statuary of the eastern world, Velasquez reports each and all of these monuments as being exactly of the height of the city wall, that is, sixty feet, and all possessing the proportions of the human figure. He adds, what is equally marvelous, that no two of them were precisely alike in countenance, and very few in their sculptural costume. There was some distinctive emblem upon each, and he was informed that they were statues of the ancient kings of Assyria, from before the foundation of Babylon, and of their descendants in the Aztec empires of this continent. They stood sixty feet apart, with a smaller monument of some mythological animal between each, and were said to number one hundred and fifteen, on each side of the avenue they formed, which was one hundred and twenty feet in width. A similar but shorter avenue, it appears, crossed the city from north to south, having a proportional number of such monuments through its entire extent; and these two grand avenues ran through wide areas of green sward richly grouped with lofty trees. But the translator finds himself trespassing upon forbidden ground and must forbear.

As the cavalcade advanced through this highway to the centre of the city, they found it crowded on each side with the masses of the population assembled to behold a spectacle so unprecedented and mysterious; but the utmost order prevailed and even the silence was profound. The news of the slaughter and disperson of their military guardians, by an army of strangers, wielding deadly weapons of fire and smoke, had already ran through every quarter of the city with increasing exaggeration and terror; but the people wisely left its investigation to their constituted authorities, and were rendered comparatively tranquil by their personal observation of its actual results. Arrived at the quadrated point, where the two great avenues we have described intersect, Mr. Huertis boldly demanded of his guide the further course and character of his destination. He was an-

swered by his dignified companion, that he would be conducted to the building immediately before him, which is described as one of majestic dimensions and style, where the monarch of the nation daily assembled with his councillors, at the hour of noon, to administer justice and listen to complaints. In the meantime, his wounded friend could be placed in a state of greater ease and repose, in one of the appartments of the edifice, while the mules and baggage could be disposed of in its basement vaults. When this was accomplished the hours of audience had arrived.

The entire party of strangers, with the young chief and several of his subordinates, were then led into a large and lofty hall, surrounded by columns, and displaying three raised seats covered with canopies of rich drapery and design. On the one of these, which stood at the eastern end, sat the monarch himself, a personage of grave but benignant aspect, about sixty years of age, arrayed in scarlet and gold, and having a golden image of the rising sun, of extraordinary splendor, displayed on the back of his throne. On the seat on the southern side, sat a venerable man of advanced age, not less gorgeously attired; and the seat at the western end was occupied by a functionary of similar years and costume. Around the apartment, and especially around the steps of the throne, sat other grave looking men, in scarlet robes. Huertis, Velasquez, and their Indians, still carrying their loaded rifles, of which he had not suffered them to be deprived, stood on the left side of the monarch, and the young chief and his soldiers on the right. The latter gave his statement with truth and manly candour, although the facts which he averred seemed to fill the whole council with amazement, and left a settled gloom upon the imperial brow. The whole proceeding possesses great interest in Velasquez's narrative, but we can only briefly state that it resulted in the decision, which was concurred in by the associate councillors, that the strangers having magnanimously released and restored the company of guards, after they had surrendered themselves prisoners; and having voluntarily entered the city in a peaceable manner, when they might possibly have effected their escape, were entitled to their personal freedom, within the limits of the city, and might eventually, under voluntary but indispensible obligations, become eligible to all the privileges of citizenship, within the same limits. In the mean

time, they were to be maintained as prisoners of state, on condition that they made no use of their dangerous weapons, nor exhibited them to terrify the people. With this decision, Huertis and his companions were perfectly satisfied, for the latter had undiminished confidence in his ability and determination to achieve their escape, as soon as he should have accomplished the scientific objects of his expedition. On leaving the hall of justice, they observed the elder military chief, of whom a slight mention has been made, brought in with two others of inferior rank; and it was afterwards currently reported that they had been sentenced to close imprisonment. It was, also, ascertained by Velasquez, that the four companies of rangers, already noticed, composing a regiment of two hundred men, constituted the whole military force of this timid and peaceful people.

From this point, our abstract of the narrative must be chiefly a brief catalogue of the most important of the concluding events. The place of residence assigned to our travellers, was the vacant wing of a spacious and sumptuous structure, at the western extremity of the city, which had been appropriated, from time immemorial, to the surviving remnant of an ancient and singular order of priesthood called Kaanas, which, it was distinctly asserted in their annals and traditions, had accompanied the first migration of this people from the Assyrian plains. Their peculiar and strongly destinctive lineaments, it is now perfectly well ascertained are to be traced in many of the sculptured monuments of the central American ruins, and were found still more abundantly on those of Iximaya. Forbidden, by inviolably sacred laws, from intermarrying with any persons but those of their own caste, they had here dwindled down, in the course of many centuries, to a few insignificant individuals, diminutive in stature, and imbecile in intellect. They were, nevertheless, held in high veneration and affection by the whole Iximayan community, probably as living specimens of an antique race so nearly extinct. Their position, as an order of priesthood, it is now known, had not been higher, for many ages, if ever, than that of religious mimes and bacchanals, in a certain class of pagan ceremonies, highly popular with the multitude. This, indeed, is evident from their characteristics in the sculptures. Their ancient college, or hospital, otherwise vacant and forlorn, was now chiefly occupied by a much higher order of priests, called Mahaboons, who were

their legal and sacerdotal guardians. With a Yachin, one of the junior brethren of this order, named Vaalpeor, a young man of superior intellect and attainments, Velasquez soon cultivated a friendly and confidential acquaintance, which proved reciprocal and faithful. And while Huertis was devoting all his time and energies to the antiquities, hieroglyphics, ethnology, science, pantheism, theogony, arts, manufactures, and social institutions of this unknown city and people, the ear of this young pagan priest was as eagerly imbibing, from the wiley lips of Velasquez, a similar knowledge of the world at large, to him equally new and enchanting. If Huertis had toiled so severely, and hazarded so much, both as to himself and companions, to acquire a knowledge of this one city and people, it soon became clear to the penetrating mind of Velasquez, that Vaalpeor possessed enough both of mental ambition and personal energy to incur equal toil and risk to learn the wonders of the cities and races of the greater nations of mankind. Indeed, this desire evidently glowed in his breast with a consuming fervor, and when Velasquez, after due observation proposed the liberation of the whole expedition, with Vaalpeor himself, as its protected companion, the now consciously imprisoned pagan, horror-stricken at first, regarded the proposition with complacency, and finally, with a degree of delight, regardless of consequences. It was, however, mutually agreed that the design should be kept secret from Huertis, until ripe for success. A serious obstacle existed in his plighted guardianship of the Kaana children, whom he could abandon only with his life ; but even this was not deemed insurmountable.

In the meantime, Huertis, to facilitate his own objects, had prevailed upon his entire party to conform in dress and habits with the community in which they lived. The city was surrounded on all sides by a lofty colonade, sustaining the upper esplanade of the city walls, and forming a broad covered walk beneath, in which the population could promenade, sheltered from sun and shower. In these places of general resort, the new citizens appeared daily, until they had become familiarly known to the greater part of the eighty-five thousand inhabitants of the city. Huertis, moreover, had formed domestic and social connexions ; was the welcome guest of families of the highest rank, who were fascinated with the information he afforded them of the external world; had made tacit converts to liberty of many influential

persons; had visited each of the four grand temples which stood in the centre of the several quadrangular divisions of the city, and externally conformed to their idolatrous worship He had even been admitted into some of the most sacred mysteries of these temples, while Velasquez, more retired, and avowedly more scrupulous, was content to receive the knowledge thus acquired, in long conversations by the sick couch of poor Hammond, now rapidly declining to the grave.

Mr. Hammond's dreadful wound had but partially healed in the course of several months; his constitution was exhausted, and he was dying of remittent fever and debility. His chief regret was that he could not assist his friend Huertis in his researches and drawings, and determine the place of the city by astronomical observations which his friends were unable to take. The day before he died, he was visited by some of the medical priesthood, who, on seeing numerous light spots upon his skin, where the preparation with which he had stained it had disappeared, they pronounced him *a leper*, and ordered that all intercourse with the building should be suspended. No explanation would convince them to the contrary, and his death confirmed them in their opinion. Availing himself of this opportunity, and under the plea that it was important to their safety, Vaalpeor removed the two orphan children in his charge to one of the country temples in the plain, and the idle mules of the strangers were employed to carry tents, couches, and other bulky requisites for an unprovided rural residence. It may be added that he included among them much of the baggage of his new friends, with the greater part of their rifles and amunition. In the mean time Huertis, Velasquez, and about half of their party, were closely confined to the part of the edifice assigned for their occupation. Their friend Hammond had been interred without the walls, in a field apropriated to lepers by the civic authorities. Huertis, was now informed of the plan of escape, but was not ready; he had more daguerreotype views to take, and many curiosities to collect. The interdicted period of nine days having expired, the young priest, who had free access to the city at all times, again appeared at their abode and urged an early retreat, as the return of the orphan children would soon be required. But Huertis was abroad in the city and could not be consulted. He remained absent all the day, and did not return to his appartments at night. It was

so all the next day and night, and Valasquez was deeply alarmed. On searching his rooms for his papers, drawings and instruments, for secret transmital into the country, he found them all removed, including those of Mr. Hammond which were among them. It was then vainly hoped that he had effected his escape with all his treasures, but his Indians knew nothing of the matter.

Shortly after this discovery, Vaalpeor arrived with its explanation. Huertis had made a confidant of his intended flight whom he idly hoped would accompany it, and she had betrayed him. His offence, after his voluntary vows, and his initiation into the sacred mysteries, was unpardonable, and his fate could not be doubted. Indeed, the trembling priest at length admitted that he had been sacrificed in due form upon the high altar of the sun, and that he himself had beheld the fatal ceremony. Huertis, however, had implicated none of his associates, and there was yet a chance of escape. To pass the gates was impossible; but the wall might be descended in the night by ropes, and to swim the moat was easy. This was effected by Velasquez and fifteen of his party the same night; the rest either did not make the attempt or failed, and the faithful Antonio was among them The fugitives had scarcely reached the secluded retreat of Vaalpeor, and mounted their mules, before the low yelp of bloodhounds was heard upon their trail and soon burst into full cry. But the dogs were somewhat confused by the scent of so man footsteps on the spot at which the party mounted, and did not follow the mules until the horsemen led the way. This afforded time for the fugitives, racing their swift mules at full speed, to reach the opening of the valley, when Velasquez wheeled and halted, for the pursuers were close at hand. A conflict ensued in which many of the horsemen were slain, and the young kaana received an accidental wound of which he retains the scar. It must suffice to say, that the party eventually secured their retreat without loss of life; and by break of day they were on a mountainous ridge many leagues from Iximaya. In about fourteen days, they reached Ocosingo, after great suffering. Here Velasquez reluctantly parted with most of his faithful Indians, and here also died Vaalpeor, from the unaccustomed toil and deprivations of the journey. Velasquez, with the two Aztec children, did not reach San Salvador until the middle of February, when

they became objects of the highest interest to the most intellectual classes of that city. As the greatest ethnological curiosities, in living form, that ever appeared among civilized men, he was advised to send them to the United States, and thence to Europe; and they are at present exhibiting in this country. When they first arrived in New York, they were in the temporary possession of a person who, not knowing their true origin and race, exhibited them as dwarfs; but on the arrival of their appointed guardian, with the journal and narrative of Senor Velasquez, they were restored to their actual character, as stated in this publication. They are supposed to be respectively eight and ten years of age; and both are lively, playful, and affectionate. But it is as specimens of an *absolutely unique* and nearly extinct race of mankind, that they claim the attention of physiologists and all men of science.

MEMOIR

OF AN

EVENTFUL EXPEDITION

IN

CENTRAL AMERICA;

RESULTING IN THE DISCOVERY OF THE IDOLATROUS CITY OF

IXIMAYA,

In an unexplored region; and the possession of two

REMARKABLE AZTEC CHILDREN,

Descendants and Specimens of the Sacerdotal Caste, (now nearly extinct,) of the Ancient Aztec Founders of the Ruined Temples of that Country,

DESCRIBED BY

JOHN L. STEVENS, ESQ.,

AND OTHER TRAVELLERS.

Translated from the Spanish of

PEDRO VELASQUEZ,

OF SAN SALVADOR.

NEW YORK:

PRINTED BY J. W. BELL,

178 FULTON STREET.

1850.

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